

Tampering with our food supply will have tragic health consequences that may not show up for decades. Even then, the linkage will not be strong enough to convince everyone of the folly of what is being proposed.

As a physician, I am convinced that the changes that have already occurred in our food supply due to agri-business, chemical fertilizers, and genetic alteration of the plants we eat are responsible, in part, for the alarming rise in childhood illnesses and chronic illnesses in adults. Belatedly, this is beginning to be recognized by leaders in HHS and by the regular medical community.

Over-use of commercial fertilizers has robbed the soil of micro-nutrients. Now proposals are advanced to significantly alter the very nature of foods without adequate testing to ensure that no harm will be done. Has agriculture learned nothing from the disasters created by the chemical industry that has had such devastating effects on the environment and our population?

Do not let profit incentives drive the discussion. You will kill us all! Instead put protecting the planet first!

I am writing in reference to Bayer CropScience's August 15th petition to establish a tolerance for Glufosinate in or on Rice and Cotton. I believe that by approving the residues requested by Bayer you will be exposing the public to unnecessary health risks, potentially increasing use of toxic herbicides on rice and cotton, and endangering the livelihoods of farmers by shutting off valuable export markets that are rejecting transgenic crops.

I am concerned about the loss of overseas markets for farmers growing transgenic crops and for farmers whose own ability to market their crops is threatened by genetic pollution. Many countries throughout the world are refusing transgenic crops and USDA organic standards strictly prohibit the use of transgenic seeds. Glufosinate tolerance levels have not been established by the international food standards commission, Codex Alimentarius. Events such as StarLink and last year's ProdiGene incident highlight the inadequacies of our current system in keeping transgenic crops segregated.

In Canada, farmers growing transgenic crops have detected triple herbicide resistance in weeds and volunteer canola plants as a result of gene transfer, rendering the herbicides useless. If Bayer's petition is approved, it will only be a matter of time before Red Rice, which is the same species as cultivated rice and also one of the most virulent weeds on rice farms, becomes resistant to Glufosinate. Similar gene transfer in rice will lead to the need for new, more toxic herbicides.

Peer-reviewed scientific studies have shown Glufosinate to be "highly toxic" to aquatic animals such as clams, oysters, water fleas, fish and birds at doses as low as 0.5 ppm. As rice is grown in an aquatic environment, the adoption of Glufosinate tolerant rice will have tragic impacts for the ecosystems of rice growing areas. The EPA classifies Glufosinate as "persistent" and it has been found in the edible parts of spinach, wheat and radishes more than 120 days after being sprayed with the chemical.

The approval of Glufosinate tolerant rice and cotton will send us a step backward in our efforts toward a more sustainable agriculture. Please take action to ensure that our current system of agriculture moves toward one that is less reliant on chemicals, and ensures our farmers a prosperous livelihood. I strongly urge you to deny Bayer's request for approval of Glufosinate tolerance and to work with other government agencies to enact a more rigorous approval and testing process for transgenic crops.

Sincerely,

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